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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 003035

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA

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SUBJECT: BAMYAN GOVERNOR WORRIED ABOUT POST-ELECTION
ENVIRONMENT

Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Deputy Coordinator Hoyt Y
ee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In early September meetings with PRT
Bamyan's DOS rep, the Governor of Bamyan Province Habiba
Sarobi confided that she is &very worried8 about
Afghanistan's post-election stability, indicating that
trouble could come &from the North.8 She lamented
President Karzai's decision to bring former Defense Minister
Marshal Fahim back into government and worries that Fahim
could stir up trouble. She also indicated that supporters of
presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah could cause trouble
as well. Separately, Sarobi acknowledged that a Chinese
survey team has moved into the province's coal-rich north
with approval from the Ministry of Mines. The Chinese have
reportedly agreed to build an 800mw coal-fired power plant in
Kalog, in northeastern Bamyan. Sarobi is skeptical about
Chinese business practices and commitment to provincial
development. At a governance meeting, Sarobi demanded that
the National Directorate of Security (NDS) arrest Provincial
Information and Culture Director Najeebulah Ehrar for
corruption and anti-government actions. Following a tense
back-and-forth between Sarobi and NDS, NDS agreed to arrest
Ehrar; however, he is still reported to be at large. END
SUMMARY

Governor Sarobi Fears for Afghanistan's Future

¶2. (C) During a routine meeting with the DoS PRT rep, the
Governor Sarobi commented about post-election stability. She
said she is &very worried8 about Afghanistan's stability.
Asked to clarify the source of her concern, Sarobi
characterized the election situation as &confused8 and
&troubled,8 and stated that trouble could come &from the
North.8 She lamented President Karzai's decision to bring
the former Defense Minister Fahim back into government and
worries that he could stir up trouble. Pressed on why Fahim
or &the North8 would stir up trouble if Karzai is
re-elected, Sarobi explained that that Karzai had &clearly8
made too many political promises during the campaign with too
many &warlords and bad people8 and that this could cause
problems after the election. When asked if Abdullah could be
a source of instability were he to lose the elections given
the number of complaints before the ECC against Karzai,
Sarobi hesitantly nodded. With a nervous laugh she confided
that &I don't really like Abdullah,8 but did not elaborate
further about how he might cause trouble.

Chinese Moving in up North

¶3. (C) Governor Sarobi confirmed what New Zealand PRT patrols
have been reporting in recent days, that a Chinese survey
team from the company MCC has moved into the province's
coal-rich northeast (Eshpushe, Du Abe) to begin exploration
work. Sarobi reported that the Minister of Mines notified

her of the team's presence and said the Chinese plan to build a coal-fired power plant that can generate up to 800 megawatts of electricity (200MW to run mining activities and provide local power, 200MW to supply a copper mine, and 400MW for the Ministry of Energy). She said she urged the Minister not to forget about plans to build a second power plant in Yakawlang to service Bamyan's energy needs. She stated that the Minister promised her a second power plant.

(COMMENT: Sarobi may have been misinformed or misunderstood the Minister's remarks regarding an 800MW coal-fired power plant. The Aynak Copper Mine, awarded to MCC, requires the company to construct a 400 MW coal-fired power plant from which 200MW will be used internally and 200MW provided to the national grid. END COMMENT)

¶4. (C) Despite the promise of electrification and some employment, Sarobi expressed reservations about the Chinese. She complained that, after five years, the Chinese had done nothing on a road in Wardak province that connects to a road into Bamyan and feared a repeat in Bamyan. She also voiced concern that the Chinese may bring in an all-Chinese work force thereby triggering resentment and tension among the local population. Similarly, she worries that the Chinese may not agree (or honor agreements) to build much needed clinics, schools, and other infrastructure in exchange for rights to extract coal. Thus, while a legitimate coal business that brings electrification and some level of development could go a long way towards improving stability in a region plagued by criminal (and insurgent) activity connected with the mine, Sarobi remains unconvinced that Chinese investment will deliver.

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Governor Sarobi Demands Arrest of Information and Culture Director

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¶5. (C) In a separate Governance meeting, Governor Sarobi demanded that NDS arrest the provincial Director of Information and Culture Najeebulah Ehrar on charges of corruption and anti-government behavior. She complained bitterly that Ehrar had used the media tools available to him to wage an on-going campaign against her, accusing Sarobi of inappropriate use of State resources. She labeled his actions as anti-government, thus requiring the involvement of NDS. Deputy NDS Director Colonel Adel explained that Ehrar had not responded to three requests from the NDS prosecutor's office and that Ehrar was simply ignoring their orders. Strangely, Adel then added that NDS had completed all the paperwork required for an arrest, but had not completed the final step required by law of informing the Provincial Governor. Sarobi testily countered that the ANSF had no problems arresting the Director of Public Works and antiquities traffickers. She pointedly asked the Deputy Chief of Police and Deputy NDS Chief what the difference is between the two directors. The grilling continued when Sarobi asked why the I/C director had been seen in NDS vehicles and NDS had failed to arrest him. NDS lamely stated that the NDS &must have informants8 as if to imply the I/C director were an informant. In the face of Governor Sarobi's tough questions, NDS agreed to arrest Ehrar &right after the meeting;8 however, he reportedly remains at large.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Deputy NDS Director Adel's various responses to Governor Sarobi's repeated probing appeared disjointed. It was not clear if NDS/ANP had actively pursued any charges against Ehrar. Of equal interest was Sarobi's crusade-like behavior, berating the NDS Deputy in front of 15 people about an issue more appropriately handled behind closed doors. The Governor was visibly annoyed that Ehrar continued to take

pot-shots at her through the media tools at his disposal, even labeling his behavior) which is completely separate from allegations of corruption and antiquities trafficking) as anti-government and, as such, warranting the involvement of NDS. This uncharacteristic display was likely a calculated move to project her authority and to send a clear message to those in attendance that she remains in charge and will not ease up on her perceived duties as Governor as her term likely winds to its end. PRT will continue to follow Sarobi,s anti-corruption efforts and NDS,s support (or lack thereof) for these efforts.

EIKENBERRY